



Afghanistan Food Security Conditions and Causes

A special report by the Famine Early Warning
Systems Network (FEWS NET)

August 2007

This publication was authored by Michael Viola, Fazal Karim Najimi, and Brian Bacon under the United States Agency for International Development Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Indefinite Quantity Contract, AFP-I-00-05-00027-00, managed by Chemonics International. Funding for this report was provided by USAID/Afghanistan.

Afghanistan Food Security Conditions and Causes

A special report by the Famine Early Warning
Systems Network (FEWS NET)

DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTION	2
THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION	3
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	4
METHODOLOGY	4
GEOGRAPHIC ORIENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT	4
ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY	5
MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN	6
THE CURRENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN	9
BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS OF THE NRVA 2003 AND NRVA 2005	9
OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION	10
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT FOOD AID PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN	11
ANNEX A: ASSESSMENT SCOPE OF WORK.....	13

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to express their gratitude to Karim Najimi, FEWS NET Representative in Afghanistan, for his hospitality, concern, and technical and logistical support; and whose insights to and understanding of the situation in Afghanistan represent a significant input and contribution to the report findings and recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an assessment conducted in Afghanistan by FEWS NET in May-July 2007. The purpose of the assessment was to document the current food security situation and examine the underlying causes of food insecurity in Afghanistan to serve as background and assist in the planning of a Public Law 480 Title II non-emergency development food aid program scheduled to commence in Afghanistan in US Government fiscal year 2008.

Assessment Methodology

The team collected and reviewed reports concerning food insecurity in Afghanistan and interviewed persons involved in food security and vulnerability mapping. A workshop was held to present the findings of the assessment and to elicit feedback concerning both the findings and issues related to food aid in Afghanistan. PVOs and NGOs attending the workshop met with representatives of the USAID Office of Food for Peace to discuss the mechanics of the proposed development food aid program and its broad parameters.

Geographic Orientation

For the purposes of the assessment, the country has been divided into five regions, as follows: a) the North, Northeast, and East, b) Northwest, c) Central Highlands and Extreme Northeast, d) South, Southeast, and Southwest, and e) the Poppy-Growing Areas.

Assessment Terminology

The food security terms used in the assessment generally conform to the USAID Food Security Policy Paper. “Chronic” or persistent food insecurity in Afghanistan was found to mean anywhere from 10-30 years; and “transitory” food insecurity was interpreted as “short-term” or “temporary”, i.e. emergency situations. Food insecurity was categorized as “moderate”, “high”, or “extreme”, depending on the percentage of a given population exhibiting food insecurity.

Key Indicators of Food Insecurity

The key indicators used to date in determining food insecurity in Afghanistan have been: a) dietary diversity, i.e. the types of foods consumed in a given period, and b) food consumption in the amount of 2,100 calories per day adjusted for the sex and age of the respondent.

Characteristics and Underlying Causes of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan

Food insecurity in Afghanistan is, broadly speaking, a problem of “access” to food. That said: “availability” and “utilization” of food have also characterized food insecure situations in Afghanistan and must be taken in account when planning and developing food aid and food security interventions.

The principal causes of food insecurity in Afghanistan are: lack of employment opportunities, low wages and low household income, insufficient local production of wheat and cereals, declining livestock production, insufficient water resources for agriculture (i.e. drought) lack of access to and poor quality of drinking water, lack of education and health services—particularly for women, widespread indebtedness, and refugee and IDP migration. The foregoing are exacerbated by a number of complex factors, the most prominent of which are conflict and insecurity, environmental degradation, and low levels of education.

Risk and Vulnerability

Afghans in both the rural and urban areas are exposed to risk and vulnerability to food insecurity. The rural population is more prone to natural disasters but the urban population experiences more financial shocks. The most vulnerable are women and children, followed by the elderly and disabled. Food insecurity in Afghanistan is geographically widespread but is more prevalent in the rural areas. Moreover, there exists a correlation between elevation and food insecurity, i.e. the higher up one lives, the greater the possibility of food insecurity.

THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

Background

The National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment conducted in 2005 (NRVA 2005) found that approximately 61 percent of Afghans from the rural, urban, and Kuchi (unsettled pastoralists) populations experienced low dietary diversity and poor to very poor food consumption. In addition, a total of approximately 8.5 million Afghans throughout the country, roughly 30 percent of the population, do not meet their minimum food requirements and are food insecure to some degree. Twenty percent of the population—approximately 6 million people—suffer from chronic food insecurity, with the largest numbers of chronically food insecure people concentrated in the Central Highlands. The provinces manifesting very poor food diversity are: Day Kundi, with more than 80 percent of the population affected, Bamyan and Nuristan, 61-80 percent affected, and Ghor, Uruzgan, Zabul, and Nimroz, 41-60 percent affected.

Update

The National Surveillance System (NSS – composed of the World Food Program (WFP) and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) – has found that food insecurity in Afghanistan has worsened since the NRVA 2005 was conducted. Food consumption scores have deteriorated in the North, Northwest and West, and household expenditures for food have increased in the Northeast, Southeast, and West. The 2006 drought affected rain-fed wheat and resulted in a reduction of yield in most regions; and increasing insecurity has hampered reconstruction efforts and impacted negatively on food security. It is now estimated that an additional 1.9 million Afghans are food-insecure, raising the current total of food insecure to approximately 10.4 million people.

Overview of the Current Food Security Situation

Food availability is currently relatively good in most parts of Afghanistan. Imported cereals are available in most markets, although prices are somewhat higher than normal for this time of year in the Northeast and Northwest. At the same time, the demand for manual labor is low compared to supply, which acts to decrease the purchasing power of households. Food availability will improve, particularly in northern Afghanistan, where an above-normal harvest is expected. The South continues to be drought-affected and the security situation there has forced thousands to flee their villages. Reports and data indicate that chronic food insecurity will persist in the remote communities of the Central Highlands and in the northeastern part of the country.

The near-term prognosis for food security regionally is as follows:

- The North, Northeast and East will be food secure, however, there are concerns regarding crop diseases and locusts that could result in moderate food insecurity.
- The Northwest will experience high food insecurity. However, if the wheat crop suffers from “shrinkage”, the situation could deteriorate to extreme food insecurity.
- The Central Highlands and Extreme Northeast can expect moderate food insecurity if there is sufficient off-farm employment; if not, this region may suffer from high to extreme food insecurity.
- The South, Southeast, and Southwest will be moderately food insecure, depending on the amount of smuggling and access to off-farm jobs in the Gulf States; however, if such “trade” is curtailed and jobs do not materialize, the region could revert to high to extreme food insecurity.
- The Poppy-growing areas will be relatively food secure if earnings from poppy production continue as in the past; however, if poppy production is low and other sources of income are not made available, the region will suffer from high to extreme food insecurity.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This report presents the findings of an assessment conducted in Afghanistan in May-July 2007 by FEWS NET under USAID Contract AFP-1-00-05-00027-00. The objective of the assessment was to document and describe the current status of food security and its underlying causes in Afghanistan. Its purpose was to inform planning of a Public Law 480 (PL 480) Title II non-emergency development food aid program to be implemented in Afghanistan commencing with US Government fiscal year 2008 (October 1, 2007-September 30, 2008), particularly the broad target population(s) and area(s) of operation of that program. The Scope of Work for the assessment is attached (Annex A).

METHODOLOGY

The team reviewed information dealing with food security in Afghanistan, including reports by the Government of Afghanistan (GOA), the World Bank, and other institutions and agencies, among them NGOs and United Nations agencies. Key players in food security in Afghanistan were interviewed, including representatives of GOA ministries involved in monitoring food security, with the aim of updating existing data and learning about new circumstances affecting the current food security situation. The assessment was performed in Kabul due to travel restrictions caused by the security situation.

A workshop was held on July 2, 2007 to present the findings of the assessment to the aforementioned key players and to elicit their feedback on those findings and current thinking regarding the appropriateness of food aid programming in Afghanistan and related issues. As part of the workshop, a session was held between representatives of the USAID Office of Food for Peace and PVOs and NGOs to brief the latter on the parameters of the proposed development food aid program and to explain the basic mechanics of program participation.

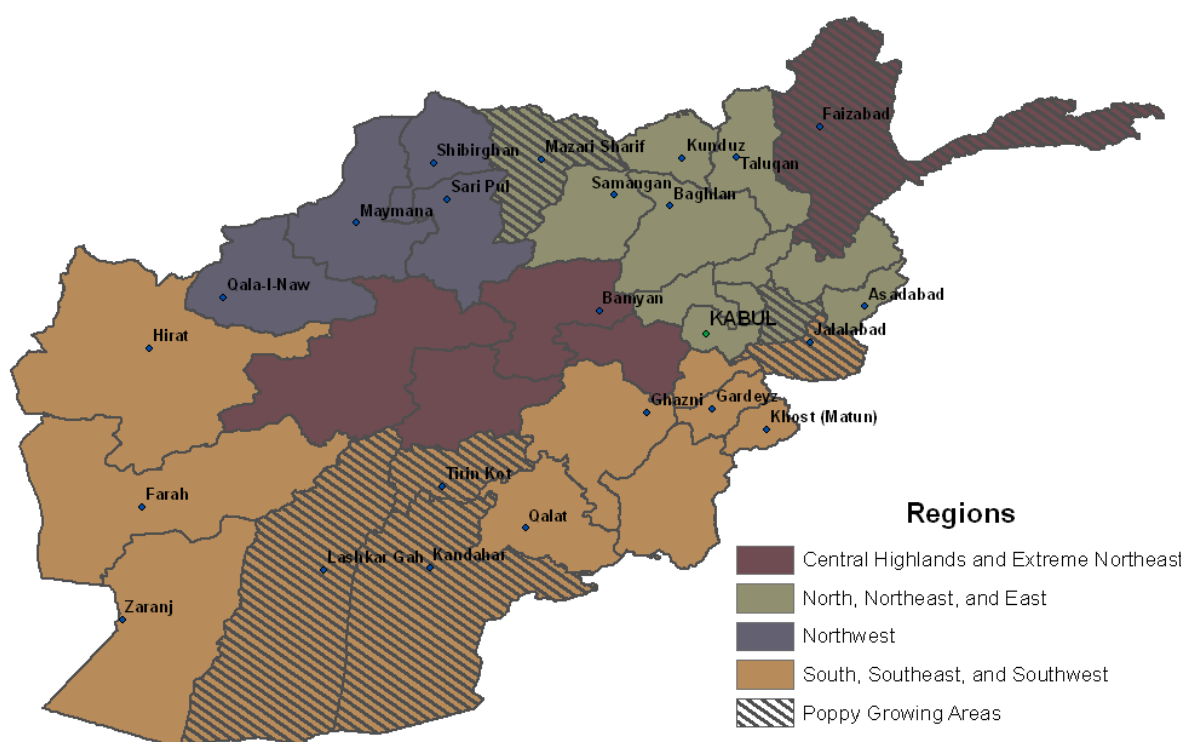
GEOGRAPHIC ORIENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT

For the purpose of the assessment, the country has been divided into five regions (see figure 1). These regions differ slightly from the groupings or regions used in the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2005 (NRVA 2005). These groupings more accurately reflect agro-meteorological and livelihood conditions and provide a better basis for the discussion of food security. The rationale for the groupings is discussed below.

The groupings are:

- **North, Northeast, and East:** 12 provinces, including Baghlan, Balkh, Kabul, Kapisa, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Nuristan, Panjsher, Parwan, Samangan, and Takhar. Except for Samangan, which is rain-fed, these provinces rely on intensive irrigation for crop production.
- **Northwest:** Four provinces, including Baghdis, Faryab, Jawzjan, and Sari Pul. These provinces mainly practice rain-fed agriculture and are vulnerable to low precipitation.
- **Central Highlands and Extreme Northeast:** Five provinces, including Badakhshan, Bamyan, Day Kundi, Ghor, and Wardak. These provinces have an elevation of over 2,500 meters; their climate is not conducive to agriculture; arable land is in short supply; there are few roads and permanent marketplaces; and the populations of these provinces migrate in search of work.
- **South, Southeast, and Southwest:** 13 provinces, including: Farah, Ghazni, Helmand, Hirat, Kandahar, Khost, Logar, Nangarhar, Nimroz, Paktika, Paktiya, Uruzgan, and Zabul. These provinces border on Iran and Pakistan and are located at lower elevations. Their populations have ethnic ties to Iran and Pakistan and migrate to the Gulf States and Iran for work opportunities. Agriculture and smuggling account for portions of their livelihoods.
- **The Poppy-growing areas:** Seven provinces, including Badakhshan, Balkh, Helmand, Kandahar, Laghman, Nangarhar, and Uruzgan. While poppies are grown in other provinces, poppy production is the predominant activity and main source of income in these areas.

Figure 1: Regions of Afghanistan



Source: FEWS NET Afghanistan

ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

Food security terms used in this Report, including the term “food security” itself, conform to the broad definitions outlined in the USAID Food Aid and Food Security Policy Paper dated February 1995, i.e. “When all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.” Central to the achievement of food security are three distinct, interrelated variables: a) availability - sufficient quantities of food are consistently available to all individuals within a country; b) access - when households and all individuals within them have adequate resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet; and c) utilization - the proper biological use of food, requiring a diet providing sufficient energy and essential nutrients, potable water, and adequate sanitation. (This definition of food security was subsequently expanded to emphasize the vulnerability to shocks that impede the attainment of food security.)

Chronic Food Insecurity

“Chronic” food security is defined as: “A long term or persistent inability to meet minimum food consumption requirements.”¹ In the Afghanistan context “chronic” is generally taken to mean anywhere from 10 to 30 years.

Transitory Food Insecurity

“Transitory” food insecurity is defined as: “A short-term or temporary inability to meet minimum food consumption requirements.”² Indeed, WFP estimates that each year approximately 400,000 Afghans are seriously affected by natural disasters, including droughts, floods, earthquakes, and extreme weather. It can be assumed that some of those disaster victims, among others, suffer from short-term or transitory food

¹ Devereux, Stephen, 2006: “Desk Review: Distinguishing Between Chronic and Transitory Food Insecurity in Emergency Needs Assessments”, Rome: WFP Emergency Needs.

² Ibid

insecurity. In addition, many Afghan households experience food insecurity during the “lean” season, the period between the harvests. Given the short-term, temporary nature of transitory food security situations, data does not exist in Afghanistan on the numbers and locations of affected populations beyond that collected for the purpose of responding to and reporting on those emergent situations.

Degrees of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan

The following terms were used to facilitate the understanding of the degrees of food insecurity suffered by various population groups in Afghanistan:

- Moderate Food Insecurity: scores of less than 50 percent on food security indicators (see below).
- High Food Insecurity: scores of 51-79 percent on food security indicators.
- Extreme Food Insecurity: scores of 80 percent or more on food security indicators.

Key Indicators Used to Measure Food Insecurity in Afghanistan

The indicators of food insecurity most commonly used in Afghanistan to date have been: a) “dietary diversity”, defined in the NRVA 2005 as “the number of different foods consumed during the week prior to the survey and the frequency by which these foods are consumed”; and b) food intake or consumption, based on an average of approximately 2,100 calories per person per day, adjusted for age and sex. Those factors or indicators (i.e. dietary diversity and food consumption) were combined with the proportions of households accessing the market or relying on their own food production, resulting in the formulation in the NRVA 2005 of four “food consumption” classifications or groups, as follows:

- Low dietary diversity/very poor food consumption
- Low dietary diversity/poor food consumption
- Better dietary diversity/slightly better food consumption
- Better dietary diversity/better food consumption

Note: Both indicators, dietary diversity and food consumption, are recognized as having limitations in their ability to accurately measure food security – food consumption, because it relies on recall and it is often difficult to remember what and how much of a given food one has eaten; and, dietary diversity, because there exist local diets that are nutritionally satisfactory but not diverse. With an aim to improving the quality of findings, the methodology of the NRVA to be performed commencing in 2007 (NRVA 2007) includes: a) surveys throughout the year to better deal with the seasonal variability of food availability; and b) additional indicators linked to risk and vulnerability.

MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD INSECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN

Food insecurity in Afghanistan is a complex and geographically extensive problem with multiple sources that reportedly affects over 30 percent of the population. Most observers agree with a report by the World Bank³, based heavily on the findings of the NRVA 2005, which summarizes food insecurity in Afghanistan as follows:

“At the household level, food insecurity in Afghanistan is largely caused by inadequate access to food resulting from low household incomes.”

That said, the lack of food has been the cause of food insecurity in Afghanistan in times of drought and in isolated communities located at high elevations during winter months. The World Bank report goes on to state: “But even where household access to food is sufficient, utilization of food and nutritional outcomes may be inadequate, either because actual food intake (quantity, quality and diversity) is insufficient or because various health factors (water-borne diseases) inhibit the bodies’ ability to utilize food.”

³ Enhancing Food Security in Afghanistan: Private Markets and Policy Options, World Bank, Report No. 10, South Asia: Agriculture and Rural Development Sector, Human Development Sector

So, while “access” can be broadly considered as the major or primary characteristic of food insecurity in Afghanistan, the “availability” and “utilization” of food are also important factors which, depending on the subject beneficiary population, should be taken into account when developing food security and food aid interventions.

Key Causes or Drivers of Food Insecurity in Afghanistan

The following are the principal causes of food insecurity in Afghanistan:

- Lack of employment opportunities
- Low wages and low household income
- Insufficient local production of wheat and cereals
- Declining livestock production
- Insufficient water resources for agriculture, i.e. drought
- Lack of access to and poor quality of drinking water
- Lack of education and health services, particularly for women
- Widespread indebtedness
- Refugee and IDP migration

In addition to the above, other comprehensive factors operating in Afghanistan negatively impact food security. Most of those factors affect the entire country, but some operate with more intensity in certain regions, as noted below:

- **Conflict:** Afghanistan has experienced two decades of war and internal conflict that have resulted in:
 - Death and injury to some two million Afghans.
 - Collapse of the rural economy.
 - Destruction of infrastructure, including roads, schools, health facilities, irrigation systems and structures, etc.
 - Rule of warlords instead of rule of law.

While conflict and insecurity affect the entire country, they are more prevalent in the South, Southeast, and Southwest.

- **Isolation and Lack of Foreign Investment:** During the war and the reign of the Taliban, Afghanistan was isolated from the global economy; and foreign investment has not returned, given the insecurity, instability, lack of infrastructure, and other negative factors.
- **Loss of Export Markets:** Afghanistan previously exported carpets, dried fruit, and other items, but those markets were lost due to war, conflict, and isolation.
- **Brain Drain:** The educated segment of the population has fled, resulting, among other things, in a lack of educated professionals in the ranks of government.
- **Change in Lifestyle:** Many who fled the fighting have over the intervening 20 odd years gone from a rural, agricultural, and unsettled pastoralist lifestyle to one that is urban, off-farm, and settled, and the structure, economy, and institutions of Afghan society are not equipped to handle that change.
- **Poppy Cultivation:** Many Afghans are growing poppy instead of food crops, due to the income poppy produces and because poppy requires less water than other crops.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Illegal logging and exploitation of underground water sources have caused deforestation, soil erosion, and runoff, etc.

- **Population Increase:** The population has increased without a concomitant increase in resources to service that increase.
- **Low Levels of Education:** There exists in the rural areas open hostility toward education, especially for girls; schools have been destroyed; and teachers have been killed. These attitudes are more prevalent in the South, where the population is more conservative.
- **Climate Change:** Lack of rainfall has caused drought; and higher than normal temperatures have resulted in early snowmelt and lack of water during the growing season. The effects of the drought are felt more in the South, due to its reliance on water from higher elevations.
- **Insecurity:** The insurgency has effectively isolated parts of the countryside and caused destruction, disruption, and migration. The security situation appears to be worsening nationwide, however, it is most serious, again, in the South.
- **Corruption:** Corruption has insinuated itself into many levels and facets of Afghan society. The effects of corruption are manifested, if not felt, more in the urban areas where government offices and agencies play a larger role.
- **High Cost of Production of Wheat:** The high cost of agricultural inputs, combined with lack of credit and inappropriate agricultural policy, among other things, have resulted in very high production costs and have acted as a disincentive to the local production of wheat, the staple food. This is felt more in the North in the wheat surplus-production provinces.

Shocks, Hazards, Risk, and Vulnerability

According to the NRVA 2005, both the urban and rural areas of Afghanistan are affected by shocks. Urban households are more exposed to financial and idiosyncratic shocks but are less subject to natural hazards than are Kuchi (unsettled pastoralists) and rural households. “However, only 18 percent of the urban households acknowledged being affected by shocks...while about 51 percent of Kuchi and rural households reported being affected by shocks.” Types of shocks are those associated with drinking water quantity and quality and physical security. With specific regard to food security, the NRVA 2005 found that 44 percent of all households nationwide perceive themselves to be food insecure to some degree—28 percent in urban areas, and 40 percent and 48 percent, respectively, in Kuchi and rural areas.

The Most Vulnerable

As is true in most food insecure situations, the most vulnerable members of the Afghan population are women and children, followed by the elderly and the disabled. Health and gender-related statistics illustrating the inferior status of women in Afghanistan are well known. Many children do not attend school and are forced to work under harsh conditions. In addition, children are vulnerable to the ongoing fighting, and there are allegations that children have been conscripted as soldiers by insurgent forces.

While food insecurity in Afghanistan recognizes no borders, the NRVA 2005 found that: “The gap between urban vis-à-vis Kuchi and rural households is dramatic: more than 53% for maternal health, more than 36% in access to safe drinking water and more than 25% in improved sanitation.” Given demographic changes due to rural-urban migration, those figures may be changing and the gap narrowing, but, generally speaking, food insecurity remains more severe in the rural areas.

In addition, there is somewhat of a correlation in Afghanistan between food insecurity and elevation, meaning that the higher one lives, the more difficult the livelihood and access to food and the greater the food insecurity. The Central Highlands and the extreme Northeast have consistently been found to be food insecure.

THE CURRENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS OF THE NRVA 2003 AND NRVA 2005

The profiles of the food consumption groups discussed above are shown by percentage of the total population in the following table:

Data collected and analyzed through the NRVA 2005 was disaggregated in the NRVA 2005 in accordance with the following:

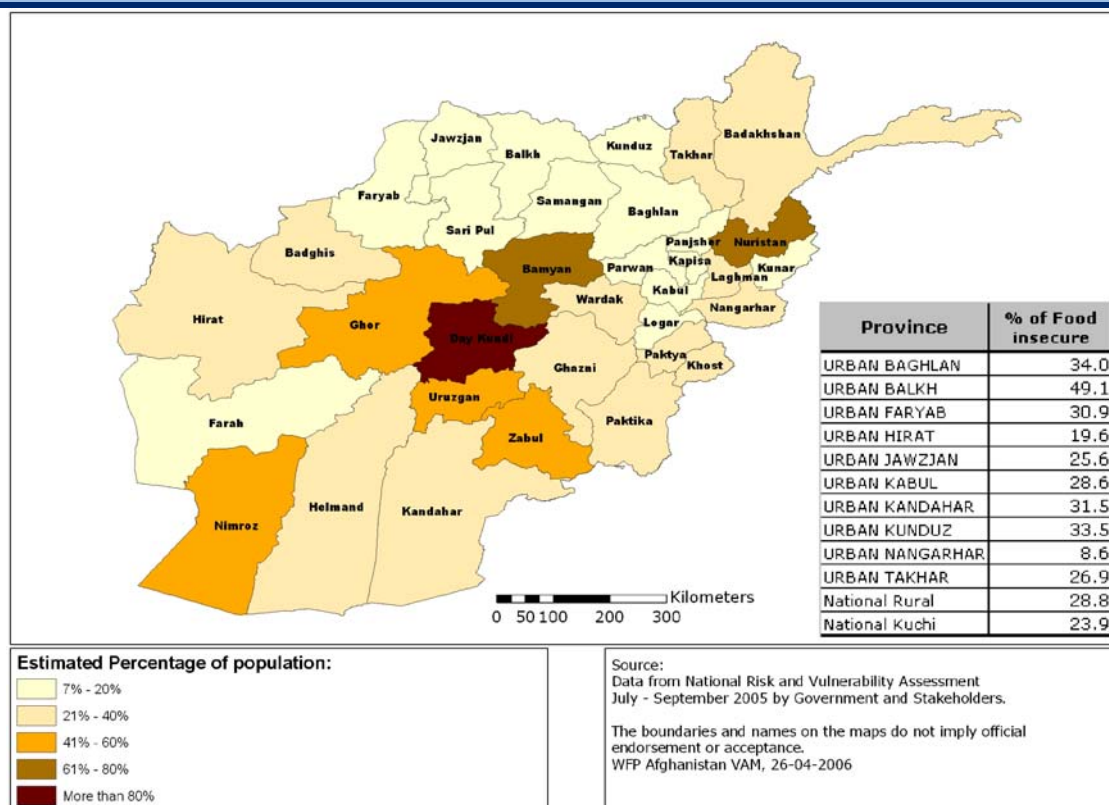
- Low dietary diversity and very poor food consumption as a percentage of the settled rural, urban, and Kuchi populations at both the provincial and district levels.
- Inadequate consumption of energy requirements, i.e. the food intake or consumption indicator, by age and sex for the settled rural, urban, and Kuchi populations at both the provincial and district levels.

Table 1: Profile of food consumption groups	
Group	Percentage
Low dietary diversity/very poor food consumption	24
Low dietary diversity/poor food consumption	37
Better dietary diversity/slightly better food consumption	20
Better dietary diversity/better food consumption	19

Source: NRVA 2005

The data for the classifications (see table above) indicate that: approximately 61 percent of Afghans across the rural, urban, and Kuchi populations experienced low dietary diversity and poor to very poor food consumption patterns. In addition, a total of approximately 8.5 million Afghans throughout the country, or roughly 30 percent of the population do not meet their minimum food requirements and are food insecure to some degree. Twenty percent of the population—approximately 6 million people—suffers from chronic food insecurity, with the largest numbers of chronically food insecure concentrated in the Central Highlands (refer to NRVA 2005 findings and figure 2).

Figure 2: Dietary diversity in Afghanistan



Source: NRVA 2005

Provinces manifesting very poor food diversity are: Day Kundi, with more than 80 percent of the population affected, Bamyán and Nuristan, 61-80 percent, and Ghor, Uruzgan, Zabul, and Nimroz, 41-60 percent.

The NRVA 2003, which covered only rural areas, found that over 65 percent of the population of the above same provinces, less Nimroz and Nuristan, suffered from poor dietary diversity.

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION

According to the WFP Standard Project Report 2006, the Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) – managed by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and WFP – found that food security in Afghanistan has worsened since the NRVA 2005 was conducted. Food consumption scores have deteriorated in the North, Northwest and West; and household expenditures for food have increased in the Northeast, Southeast, and West. The report states further that the 2006 drought affected rain-fed wheat and resulted in a reduction of yield in most regions, and that the increasing insecurity has hampered reconstruction efforts and resulted in what can only be a negative effect on food security.

The National Surveillance System (NSS) of the MRRD concurs with the above. The NSS maintains that while the food availability might currently be somewhat better than at the time the NRVA 2005 was conducted, food access is worse. In follow-up to the NRVA 2005, the NSS conducted mini-surveys in December 2005 and March and November 2006, findings from which indicate that an additional 1.9 million Afghans are now food insecure over and above those found to be food insecure by the NRVA 2005. This means that approximately 10.4 million Afghans now suffer from food insecurity to some degree. (Another small survey was conducted in March 2007 but results were not available at the time this report was written.)

Food availability, at the time the assessment was performed, was relatively good in most parts of Afghanistan. Imported cereals are available in most markets, although prices are somewhat higher than normal for this time of year in the Northeast and Northwest, areas impacted by the drought in 2006. The demand for manual labor is currently low compared to supply, which serves to reduce the purchasing power of households, particularly those that rely on the sale of labor for income. Food availability will be further improved, particularly in the North, where an above-normal harvest is expected. The South continues to be drought-affected and insecurity there has forced thousands to flee their villages. Reports and meteorological data indicate that chronic food security will persist in the remote communities of the Central Highlands and the northeastern part of the country.

Food Security Prognosis by Region

The near-term prognosis for food security by region is as follows:

- **North, Northeast, and East:** will, generally speaking, be food secure with food surpluses, however, there are concerns regarding crop diseases and locusts, which, if they occur, could result in moderate food insecurity.
- **Northwest:** will experience high food insecurity, however, if the wheat crop suffers from “shrinkage”, the situation could worsen to extreme food insecurity.
- **Central Highlands and Extreme Northeast:** can expect moderate food insecurity if there is sufficient off-farm employment in Afghanistan and Iran; if not, this region is likely to suffer from high to extreme food insecurity.
- **South, Southeast, and Southwest:** will be moderately food insecure, depending on cross-border “trade”, i.e. smuggling, and access to off-farm jobs in the Gulf States; however, if that “trade” is curtailed and jobs do not materialize, this region could revert to high to extreme food insecurity.
- **Poppy-growing areas:** will be relatively food secure if earnings from poppy production continue as in the past; however, if poppy production is eliminated or severely curtailed and other sources of income are not made available, the region could suffer from high to extreme food insecurity.

Some main findings are summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Summary re-cap of findings by region

Factor	Region				
	North, Northeast, and East	Northwest	Central Highlands and Extreme Northeast	South, Southeast, and Southwest	Poppy-growing Areas
Conflict and insecurity				X	
Hostility toward education				X	
Drought conditions				X	
Very poor food diversity			X	X	
Chronic food insecurity			X		
Near-term prognosis	Food secure	High food insecurity	Moderate food insecurity depending on availability of jobs	Moderate food insecurity depending on jobs outside of Afghanistan	Food secure if the poppy crop is not damaged

Note: The primary causes of food insecurity in Afghanistan exist throughout the country, however, certain of those causes, outlined in the table above, are more intense in some regions, as indicated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT FOOD AID PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN

European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office

Beginning in July 2007, the European Commission Directorate General Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) will begin a food aid program valued at 6 million Euros per year. This program will be operated nationwide and implemented through Afghan and international NGOs.

Government of Afghanistan

The Government of Afghanistan was provided with 8,700 metric tons (MT) of vegetable oil in 2006 and 8,200 MT of vegetable oil in 2007 under a US Department of Agriculture (USDA)-supported Title I-funded Food for Progress Program.

Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps has monetized Food for Progress vegetable oil, including 2,000 MT of vegetable oil in 2005 and 10,000 MT of soybean oil in 2006. The proceeds from the sale of the commodity are being used to finance agribusiness, horticulture, and animal husbandry and health activities in six provinces in the northern and southern regions. Some of the proceeds are used to finance technical assistance and training, implemented in conjunction with Afghan universities.

World Food Program PRRO 10427.0

The largest food aid program in Afghanistan, the WFP Post-Conflict Relief and Rehabilitation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (PRRO 10427.0) project extends from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008. While targeting 4.7 million beneficiaries in 2006, the initial program design designated approximately 6.6 million beneficiaries over the three-year life of the project. The PRRO is multi-faceted in approach, targeting food insecure areas with a number of activities, including Food for Work, Food for Training, and Food for Education, and is implemented in partnership with the GOA, non-government partners and communities. At

the time this report was being written, WFP food distributions to the southern areas of Afghanistan had been suspended due to attacks on trucks carrying food commodities.

World Vision International

World Vision is implementing a USDA-supported multi-year McGovern-Dole International Child Nutrition (Food for Education) Program in the province of Hirat.

ANNEX A: ASSESSMENT SCOPE OF WORK

A Food Security Conditions and Causes study for Afghanistan

April 30, 2007

Background

The use and targeting of U.S. food aid in Afghanistan has recently come into question. In order to better understand the nature of the current food security situation across the country, what needs there might be for food aid and how they can best be addressed, and to plan for the future, USAID/FFP and the USAID/Afghanistan Mission have defined a rapid study of the conditions and causes of both chronic and transitory food insecurity in Afghanistan that FEWS NET will undertake in Afghanistan. The ultimate goal of this work for FFP would be to better target and monitor existing programs, and to provide a recent, evidence-based report and monitoring framework in which the needs for both emergency and non-emergency food aid programming can be placed, judged, determined, and monitored.

Approach and Deliverables

In order to meet USAID/FFP and Mission objectives, FEWS NET will undertake a study to describe the current status of food security conditions and causes at a sub-national level for the entire country. The study will start with FEWS NET livelihood zoning as an initial geographic framework for the analysis. It will then apply all current knowledge and information, from all pertinent sources, to a determination of each zone's current conditions (geographic and human/social prevalence, severity, cause) of food security, and/or vulnerability. This will be described on a map, and in a narrative form. Recognizing that the livelihood zoning is not complete, the Team will be asked to identify cases where a re-definition of a livelihood zone characteristic may have to be made, or where specific sub-livelihood zone cases need to be identified and differentiated from other conditions within that same zone.

Recognizing the FEWS NET Representative's potentially critical contribution to this study, the entire LOE of the FEWS NET National Representative will be dedicated to the study for up to 30 days. Outside of a limited amount of outside-Kabul travel that the FEWS NET Representative may be asked by the Team to take, the study will otherwise largely use existing FEWS NET studies and reports, data and information from a variety of other documents and sources, and in-Kabul discussions with expert sources.

It is envisioned that this activity will consist of three distinct phases:

- The first phase would be for FEWS NET/Afghanistan and associated personnel to prepare a geographically disaggregated, comprehensive food security condition and causes report for the entire country. This report would focus not only on describing the location, numbers and characteristics of people affected, and the severity and causality of any current acute food insecurity conditions, but will also identify, in similar terms, areas of chronic food insecurity (vulnerability). It will also specifically describe and comment directly on any on-going food aid programs in each area, and the given rationale and objectives of those programs.
- Once the draft report has been prepared, it will be shared with all food security partners in Afghanistan in preparation for a two-day workshop, chaired by FFP and the Mission, where the conclusions will be discussed, and partners will provide input through presentations and feedback. Shortly after the completion of the workshop, the report will be finalized. Although a major portion of it will be published and disseminated, an internally-oriented appendix will also be prepared in order to deliver FFP with frank insights on food aid issues in this country, lessons learned about current and/or future programming and partners, and a description of any significant obstacles and/or opportunities that need to be taken into account in addressing food insecurity, with particular reference to food security needs that seem particularly appropriate for some type of food assistance.
- A third phase of this study may actually start during the second one. In addition to using the workshop to share the analysis of food security conditions and causes, and gathering the basis to confirm or refine them, the workshop will begin to provide the study implementers and FFP with

partner information and views about where food aid is, or may not be, the best tool for providing assistance, where complementary assistance should be provided alongside food aid, and where other types of interventions would be more appropriate. One or more of the consultants engaged for this study will be charged with gathering that information and assembling it in an Afghanistan Food Aid Operations report that will describe issues, resources and constraints, and provide guidance on any current or future FFP food aid programming, monitoring, and evaluation. This report/guide may include discussions of potential priority locations for assistance, an assessment of actual/potential implementing partner interests and capabilities, a base of logistic information, and considerations of where and how local instances of food aid assessment and targeting can be established and/or strengthened outside of the Mission.

The food security conditions and causes study, in all its phases, will be implemented by Chemonics International through its FEWS NET/Afghanistan National Representative, with the assistance of two external food security consultants. One or both of the two external food security consultants will have substantial expertise in maternal and child health and nutrition, and food aid targeting.

Upon approval of this Mission-funded activity, Chemonics will develop an outline of the proposed Conditions and Causes Report, and the consultants' terms of reference, for approval by USAID/FEWS NET, the Mission and FFP. After the beginning of the study, it may also identify partners and institutions that can contribute to the study and workshop, with technical and/or logistical knowledge and expertise. If it is possible, FEWS NET will seek to identify a local facilitating institution, Government or otherwise, that could assist in hosting and carrying out the analysis and workshop.

The entire study will be supervised under the normal supervisory structures of the FEWS NET IQC, by the FEWS NET CTO in FFP/PTD. A USAID/FFP team will join Mission personnel in reviewing the draft report, participating in the workshop, and helping to guide phase 3 activities.

Timeline

- Early May – Develop TOR for consultants to undertake the analysis and report, and organize the workshop.
- May, early June – Carry out study
- Mid-June – Prepare a draft report and share with partners
- Mid-June – Hold partner workshop in Kabul to discuss the findings of the draft report and develop consensus for food aid priorities
- Late June - Food aid operations report assembled.
- Late June – Complete and submit report

Deliverables

- A Food Security Conditions and Causes situation report for Afghanistan, which provides a spatial and narrative understanding of current and chronic food insecurities/vulnerabilities, by livelihood zone and hazard impact areas, of a maximum length of 30 pages.
- Partner workshop
- An appendix giving the Team's initial conclusions, and evidence base, for why food aid probably is, or may not be required in current acute or chronically food insecure areas.
- A Mission and FFP-oriented Food Aid Operations Guide

Level of Effort

Total LOE for this assignment will be 98 days, of which 45 days for the food security/food aid consultant, 23 by a second consultant, and 30 days by the FEWS NET national representative. The FEWS NET Representative will support this effort on a 100% time commitment for up to 30 days, which should include the period in which the two consultants will be in-country. No travel by any of the consultants, except by the FEWS NET Representative, is foreseen outside of Kabul.

U.S Agency for International Development

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

Tel: (202) 712-0000

Fax: (202) 216-3524

www.usaid.gov